**Diogelu Gwent
Gwent Safeguarding**

Children & Adult
Multi Agency Chronology
Guidance

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1. Introduction

This guidance has been developed in response to a Child Practice Review published in 2010 by Caerphilly Safeguarding Children Board. The review concluded that professionals would have had a better understanding/overview of the case if they had access to an up to date chronology, either single or multi agency. More recently, this guidance has been revised in response to Child Practice Review (Cases H, J and E), which were published in 2015, 2016, and 2022 respectively.

2. What is a chronology

A chronology is a tool that practitioners from a range of disciplines can use to help them understand what is happening in the life of a child, adult or family. It gives a clear account of all the major changes and significant events in the lives of the child(ren)/adults and family. Chronologies can be compiled by a single agency or be multi-agency integrated, pulling together the knowledge of and information held by agencies involved with the child, adult or family including pre-birth. A single agency chronology should commence at the first point of contact with your agency with a child, adult or family and updated and maintained on an ongoing basis.

3. The purpose of a chronology

The purpose of a chronology is to record significant events and changes. It is not a running record of everyday events and should not replace case notes or records which include more detailed and sensitive information. Chronologies are essential to:

- Gain an overview of events and changes in their lives.
- Help practitioners understand the impact, immediate and cumulative, of events and changes on any progress.
- Provide accumulative evidence of emerging needs and risks and flag when a multi-agency response may be required.
- Support the early identification of patterns and issues. This supports, and is part of, assessing and managing risk, and is particularly useful in cases where there may be no single incident, i.e., in neglect.
- Support assessment in considering past events and their relevance to the child, adult, and family's current situation. To assist in the process of assessment, analysis, planning and review when working with a child, young person, adult and family.
- Strengthen working with children, adult and their families to make sense of their life.

The Gwent Safeguarding Board promotes the use of chronologies as it is a clear requirement within the Wales Safeguarding Procedures 2019.
https://www.safeguarding.wales/en/chi-i/chi-i-cp/c3p-p14/

4. What is recorded in a chronology

The chronology provides a brief, factual record of significant events in sequential date order, and may include.
- A chronology can start prior to a child's birth or at the point the adult became known to services.
- Significant changes in the family structure, e.g., separation, divorce, bereavement, birth of a new sibling, new partner, presence of a significant adult, housing/home environment, unemployment.
- The interventions/support that have been offered and the outcome of these interventions/support.
- Factual information and events including missed/was not brought appointments, when a child starts or moves school, missing school, exclusions, offending behaviour, hospital admission, changes in peer relationships, running away/missing from home.
- Significant changes in the child, young person's, or adults' wellbeing.
- Significant changes in the parent or carers wellbeing which impact on the child or adult.

It is important to remember that a single agency chronology does not provide a complete picture of the family's life and circumstances therefore if there are reoccurring themes that are suggestive of safeguarding concerns, a duty to report must be considered.

Your agency may have a template for a chronology that is currently in use, however, attached to this document is a suggested template that can be used across all agencies, statutory or voluntary.

5. When to complete a Multi-Agency Chronology?

Learning from Child/Adult Case Practice Reviews evidence that if all the pieces of information held by separate practitioners about a child's or adults lived experience is shared appropriately, and in a timely manner, the outcome for the individual concerned may be very different. Further learning from Child/Adult Case Practice Reviews has highlighted that all agencies should consider family relationships and historical information when undertaking/contributing to assessments.

Multi Agency chronologies can be useful as it provides a more holistic approach and strengthens decision making. This should include but is not limited to
- Assessment
- Any intervention
- Care and support plan
- Safeguarding process
- At any point professionals feel it would be beneficial

When completing multi agency chronologies it is essential all practitioners and agencies understand they have a joint responsibility in safeguarding. Consequently, when the completion of a multi-agency chronology is agreed (this can be at any stage in the

case), all professionals are to ensure that information describing key incidents/events/information is passed on to the key worker in the agreed format (see appendix 1). The information held by agencies not part of the multi-agency planning team may also need to be accessed and consideration will need to be given as to how this will be done.

Children/Adult Services will be responsible for collating the information each agency individually provides into one combined multi-agency chronology. Therefore, Children/Adult Services will hold the "master copy", however all practitioners involved remain responsible for ensuring this chronology remains up to date, by passing on updates within an agreed format (this could be your own agency's chronology template, or the template attached at appendix 1), to the social worker/lead practitioner. The social worker/lead practitioner will compile this information into the format contained within appendix 1. Any updates to the chronology can be presented to each core group meeting/care and support/safeguarding meetings and included with the minutes so all partners have the same information. Timescales for submission of updates need to be agreed on in advance and by all practitioners.

Practitioners should not delay sharing information for the purpose of compiling a multi-agency chronology and any safeguarding concerns should be reported immediately.

When Children/Adult Services are collating information from agencies into one multi agency chronology, they will need to ensure there are not multiple entries concerning one event. If several agencies' chronologies refer to the same incident (e.g., a strategy meeting or a child presenting with a bruise), there only needs to be one entry regarding this within the chronology. However, it is important to be clear about where the information has come from e.g., Education. There may be more than one source of the same information. You will still be able to record from which agency records this information has been taken, who was involved, and all other information, under the relevant columns of the chronology template (appendix 1).

It should be acknowledged that some families have long and complicated histories, hence the compiling of a chronology can be an onerous task that cannot be completed within a short period of time. However, it is recommended that as much work as is practicable, is completed within the early stages of intervention, and continued commitment and time be given to the completion of a full chronology, as involvement continues. A family having a long and complicated history is not a reason to avoid dedicating time to completing a chronology, rather this indicates the validity that a good chronology can offer, as this can help to identify any clear patterns or trends within the families' history and can help workers to determine the reasons behind the families' current presenting issues. Consideration needs to be given as to how far back the chronology will go or whether some historical concerns can be summarised in a social history which should then be included at the beginning of the chronology.

The chronology can also be shared with the individual and their families if appropriate, as a means to help their understanding as to why agencies have particular concerns. Although consideration will need to be given as to whether or not full or partial information will be shared due to confidentiality issues e.g., information from a psychiatrist about one parent being shared with the other. There are some exceptions to the sharing of the chronology – see below.

Practitioners need to consider what records can be used to inform their completion of the chronology. For example, this could include information from previous Care and Support meetings, Child/Adult Safeguarding Conference minutes or assessments, GP records, hospital records, Education and Police and criminal justice records, However, this list is not exhaustive, and each agency will have a variety of sources of information from which to contribute to the chronology.

It should also be noted that when safeguarding children where illness is believed to be fabricated or induced, the importance of compiling a multi agency chronology becomes increasingly apparent. Consequently, the All Wales Protocol when dealing with this states:

"Factual accuracy is essential. A chronology, focusing particularly on the child's medical history, should be compiled in collaboration with the responsible consultant paediatrician involved and the health history of siblings should also be considered. The social worker's report and the chronology **will not routinely be shared** with parents before the conference following allegations of fabricated or induced illness. The social worker and other professionals should discuss this course of action at the child protection strategy meeting and with the independent child protection conference chair before the conference" (Pg. 415, All Wales CPP).

6. <u>How to compile/format a multi-agency chronology?</u>

In order to assist the compiling of different agencies information, the attached template (Appendix 1) has been suggested as a method for each agency to record their own chronologies. This will enable the key worker to easily combine this information into one working multi agency chronology that can be shared between practitioners and families (as appropriate) and reviewed at any multi agency meeting.

All agencies should ensure the template and guidance document is readily available for practitioners to access.

Practitioners should note that the multi agency chronology template can easily be adapted to replicate the court acceptable chronology template.

7. <u>What to record in a multi-agency chronology?</u>

A chronology provides an account of significant events in an individual's or family's history whilst incorporating information about emotional and/or relationship difficulties. It contributes to an emerging picture, based on fact and interactions of a case – current information can then be understood in the context of previous information, thus informing professional assessment.

A significant event is an incident that impacts on the child/adult's safety and welfare, circumstances, or home environment. This will inevitably involve a professional decision and/or judgment based upon the individual and family circumstances. It is important that a chronology **is not** a repeat of the records you hold for this child/adult/family, it should include **significant events/circumstances only.**

There are a number of core incidents/circumstances, which should be recorded. Dependant upon the nature of the harm, these may differ from case to case. This is not an exhaustive list however here are several examples of

Core Incidents that could be included:

• Contacts or referrals about the child/adult and/or family.
• Assessments
• Strategy discussions/meetings
• Attendance/admittance to hospital
• Safeguarding investigations
• The outcomes from the above need to be included
• Referrals to other agencies/teams e.g., SPACE Wellbeing
• House/placement moves
• School exclusions
• Criminal proceedings
• Enquires to the Child Protection Register
• Missing episodes
• Bereavement
• Any new or change in relationships
• Another person moves in or moves out of the family home
• Birth of a baby
• Self harming behaviours
• School attendance
• Child becomes looked after/child is discharged from LA care
• Assessment for Deprivation of Liberty
• Considerations around mental capacity and best interest decisions
• Change in school placement or behaviour
• Change in GP (e.g., this could be particularly significant in cases of Fabricated and Induced Illness).
• Concerns about an adult at risk in the family
• Non-engagement or missed visits (particularly an emerging pattern)
• Missed appointments (was not brought)
• Police logs detailing pertinent information re family members/family home e.g., reports of domestic incidents
• Any incidents of cruelty or mistreatment of animals.

There are also a number of other incidents/circumstances, which may be significant to the child/adult and family, depending on their circumstances.

Examples include:

A significant observation during home visits e.g., the frequent presence of unknown adults, evidence of damage to the property, negative interactions between parent and child, poor home conditions found on visit etc.

If chronologies are to accurately reflect individual/family circumstances, positive factors should also be recorded (e.g., individuals' engagement with practitioners, child's presentation in school significantly improves etc).

The above provide a small number of examples and it is essential that practitioners use their professional judgment in identifying pertinent information. There is a risk that a mechanical approach to completing a chronology that automatically records predetermined 'key facts' could weaken the focus and role of professional judgment which are vital to effective practice. A chronology must never become an end in itself and is a working tool. Chronologies must be analysed, and consideration given to the impact of any incident on the child/individual to inform decision making.

8. <u>Chronology Template explained (Appendix 1)</u>

Column 1: Date (and time if relevant)

Column 2: Source of Information – where has this information come from e.g., Education, next door neighbour etc.

Column 3: Incident/observations/circumstances – clearly explain what has taken place e.g. child protection medical has taken place at the hospital and Pediatrician has concluded it was accidental/non accidental; or someone has moved into or out of the home address; or, you have observed the carer being highly critical of the child/adult; or, concerns about neglect have accumulated over the past month and a further visit to the home today has evidenced that there has been no improvement. Make sure you include who was there, who saw what / said what etc.

Column 4: Actions and outcomes – clearly explain what action was taken in response to the circumstances in column 3 and what the outcomes were. For example, a strategy meeting was held in response to the concerns about neglect and a decision was made to undertake a joint visit with Police on the same day. Include how individual's parents/carers have responded/what they said or did.

Analysis - Please provide an analysis of the events and information highlighted in the previous box. Please draw out what themes might be reflected within this information.

Chronology Template

Family Composition
Family Composition Include every person living in the home, significant other family members e.g., father who lives elsewhere, other children living elsewhere.

Name	Relationship	Date of Birth	Address

DATE	SOURCE OF INFORMATION	INCIDENT/OBSERVATION/CHANGE OF CIRCUMSTANCES	ACTIONS / OUTCOMES

Analysis: Please provide an analysis of the events and information highlighted in the previous box. Please draw out what themes might be reflected within this information: